

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS GLORIA MOLINA AND
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

February 15, 2011

Over the past few months, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has embarked on an extensive reevaluation of their levee vegetation policy. In the near future, they intend to require the removal of the existing vegetation system adjacent to levies. While minimal technical analysis has been done on the efficacy of this proposed universal policy, implementation would threaten many miles of levy systems that are currently maintained by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) and will hamper the LACFCD's ability to consider new beautification projects along our various channel systems.

The LACFCD has a long history of working closely with the Corps to ensure that the regional drainage systems included as part of the Los Angeles County Drainage Area Project are maintained properly in order to protect human life and property from damages caused by flood waters. Therefore, the LACFCD appreciates the Corps' dilemma concerning the need to apply levee vegetation management guidelines consistently and fairly. However, the Corps enforcement of the existing vegetation policy would require removal of existing vegetation from miles of levees throughout the LACFCD.

MOTION

Molina	_____
Ridley-Thomas	_____
Yaroslavsky	_____
Knabe	_____
Antonovich	_____

The difficulty in complying with this policy is that the cumulative environmental impact may not be acceptable or even feasible under current environmental laws, and the removal of grant-funded landscaping projects could mean breaching terms of grant agreements. However, non-compliance with the policy puts the region in danger of not being eligible for Federal disaster assistance should a flooding disaster occur.

In October 2010, the LACFCD requested support from its representatives in Congress to ask the Corps to delay implementation of their levee vegetation policies until modifications are made to address multiple foreseeable conflicts that would result from enforcement. It is appropriate for the Board of Supervisors to express the importance of reevaluating this proposed policy.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD direct the Chief Executive Officer to send a five-signature letter from the Board of Supervisors to urge the Corps to delay implementation of its levee vegetation policies and to work with the various impacted flood control agencies to address the various unintended consequences of implementing the policy as currently written.

TV/sf